



Afterschool programs are an asset to the current workforce and build students' skills to better the workforce of tomorrow. Afterschool programs, as safe places for students to spend time after the school day ends, increase productivity of today's workforce and reduce remedial training required by tomorrow's employees. Iowa has long relied on afterschool programs to fill the gap between school and work schedules as a state with a consistently high percentage of parents working outside the home.

Preparing Students for the 21st Century Workforce

Iowa businesses that participated in Iowa Workforce Development's 2008 Workforce Needs Assessment noted that 45.4 percent of current vacancies require a high school education or GED. Additionally, 40.5 percent of these Iowa employers recognized soft skills (timeliness, responsibility, integrity, and character) are necessary to have in order to be successful at a job in their company. Additionally, the study noted that 45.4 percent of available jobs required a high school education or GED. *Students who participate in afterschool programs are 75 percent more likely to be A or B students, while those that do not participate in afterschool are five times more likely to be D students (YMCA of the USA, 2006).*

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Afterschool programs provide youth an opportune venue to develop the skills required to compete for the jobs of tomorrow. Many after school programs provide support for core academic subjects – reading, writing, and math – as well as such enriching subjects often pushed out of the traditional school day due to increased rigor and attention to testing – subjects such

as performing and visual arts, wellness and nutrition, and music. Perhaps even more significant, afterschool programs create opportunities for young people to develop other essential skills such as creative thinking, problem solving, team work, communication, self-direction, and the use of technology – the very skills employers know contribute most to success in the workplace of the future.

In Iowa, juvenile arrests peak at 3 pm.

– (Iowa Department of Public Safety's Uniform Crime Reporting System)

Increasing Productivity by Easing Parent Stress

Quality afterschool programs are a significant asset to businesses and other employers in Iowa. Afterschool programs increase productivity by allowing working parents to focus on their work, not on their children after school hours. *Child care-related absences cost U.S. companies an estimated \$3 billion annually due to decreased productivity (Corporate Voices for Working Families, 2006).* Additionally, in a 2008 survey conducted by the Iowa Afterschool Alliance, citizens noted that the most important benefit of a child attending an afterschool program is that it provides a safe place. In these uncertain economic times, afterschool programs are more important than ever as parents work, seek employment, and supplement income by taking on additional jobs or shifts.

According to the 2006 Iowa Youth Survey, 73% of 6th graders and 85% of 8th graders say they spend at least one to four hours unsupervised each day. Many afterschool programs across the state serve the

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vital need for a safe, engaging place for children and youth to spend time after school lets out and before parents finish work each day. Without afterschool in many communities, Iowa families struggle to find a service that meets the demand of their school and work schedules while providing enriching and engaging activities for students that compliment their learning during the school day.

Iowa Afterschool Alliance Priority: Ensure Affordable, Quality Afterschool is Available in all Iowa Communities for all Iowa Children and Youth

Afterschool programs must be affordable and accessible for Iowa's working families. *Low-income families in need of child care often spend up to 35 percent of their annual household income to ensure children are cared for while parents work (National Catholic Reporter, 2003).* Since 2006, the Iowa Legislature has recognized the importance of afterschool programming for working families by investing over \$2 million for before and after school programs across the state. Since this competitive grant program was created in 2006, requests for funding from programs statewide In 2008, afterschool programs requested almost \$3 million in funding. It should be noted that those who requested funding in the last grant cycle were only allowed a maximum request of \$50,000 per site.

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With an increased emphasis on economic development and revitalization, now is the most important time to reaffirm Iowa's commitment to family and community through a continued investment in our most precious resource: our kids. The Iowa Afterschool Alliance asks that the appropriation of funds to the Before and After School Grants be maintained in FY2010. Afterschool is not only an education issue, but an issue of economic development, as well.

What is Afterschool?

Afterschool programs provide experiences that are meaningful and beneficial to children, youth, families, and communities by offering safe, engaging, and enriching environments for children and youth when they are not in school. Quality afterschool programs utilize a youth development philosophy that incorporates the strengths and assets of youth to build their skills and broaden their experiences.

Afterschool programs not only assist youth with academic issues, but help them develop career paths and volunteer opportunities, build social skills, and become civically engaged, as well as providing preventive, gender-specific, and other specialized programming. These ongoing, continuous programs occur before school, after school, in the evenings, weekends, school and other breaks, school in-service days, or for late starts or early dismissals. They can be offered by a school, by a contractor with a school, by a community-based organization, or other partnerships at a school or other location. These programs might also be referred to as "extended learning opportunities," "out-of-school" programs, or "enrichment" programs.

About the Iowa Afterschool Alliance

The Iowa Afterschool Alliance (IAA) is a statewide afterschool network, operating into its sixth year with primary support from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, and with additional support from a variety of state agencies and non-profits. The IAA counts more than 700 individuals and organizations in its membership, including afterschool programs and afterschool champions and advocates. The IAA is staffed by State Public Policy Group, Inc., and the Chrysalis Foundation serves as fiscal agent.

To continually strive for access to high quality afterschool programming for all Iowa children and youth, the Iowa Afterschool Alliance recognizes the following long-term priorities for afterschool in Iowa:

1. The creation of a single, sustainable source of funding for afterschool programs in Iowa to meet known demand for funding to provide programming to children and youth around the state.
2. The creation of a formal state-level Council to study afterschool demand and possible solutions.
3. Considering the importance of afterschool programming in the overall educational success of Iowa's students, especially in those communities facing challenges through poverty, high crime rates, and those recovering from disasters.